



## On the Side of an Orphan

by Olayinka Balogun

PEPFAR is bringing the much-needed treatment to infants, children, adolescents and adults living with HIV. In fiscal year 2015 alone, nearly 8.6 million people have received HIV counseling and testing services, providing a critical entry point to prevention, treatment and care under the PEPFAR Nigeria Program.

**I**t began with the loss of her father to a road accident and her mother to post-natal complications three months after her birth. While Bunmi (not her real name) gained a new mother and caregiver in her aunt, Mrs. Oloye, there was still more to come for the toddler. During a door-to-door HIV Testing and Counselling campaign, organized by the USAID-supported Local Partners for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (LOPIN), Bunmi was found to be HIV+.

Terrified and sad by the test report, Mrs. Oloye was, at the same time, relieved that she had found an explanation for her niece's worsening health condition. According to Oloye, "Prior to Bunmi's HIV+ diagnosis, Bunmi was sickly and sluggish and because I am only a local herb (Agbo) seller, I was at my wit's end over the child's steady health decline."

Bunmi was placed on antiretroviral (HIV) treatment immediately after testing HIV+ and the treatment has been beneficial. "Since Bunmi started treatment, she has become agile and well. She attends clinic

monthly and we diligently give her the HIV treatment drugs every morning", Oloye commented.

Now 9 years old, Bunmi has not been told her HIV+ status, but Oloye, her husband and their two children are aware of Bunmi's HIV status. This would have to be explained to Bunmi at some point in the future. For the present, Bunmi has been told not to play with/share sharp objects to prevent passing the virus to others.

Bunmi is one of the 600,000 men, women, and children currently on HIV treatment in Nigeria, with the support of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) working through USAID, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Walter Reed Program as well as numerous Implementing Partners like LOPIN.

For 50,000 pregnant women who tested positive for HIV, PEPFAR provided antiretroviral medications to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus. Due to PEPFAR support, babies that would otherwise have been infected (like Bunmi was) were born HIV-free.

For Bunmi and her adoptive family, it has been relatively easy adhering to the strict HIV treatment regime, and they have not suffered any HIV-associated stigma or discrimination. Attesting to this, Oloye says: "The whole family is aware of Bunmi's HIV+ status and they are very supportive. Bunmi is taken to hospital appointments by her cousins".

PEPFAR wishes children living with HIV and other children in Nigeria a Happy Children's Day (May 27) 2016!

## You Need To Know

### LINKING HIV/AIDS TO WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

“The best investment we can make to end HIV as an epidemic is giving women and girls an equal opportunity”

- Mark Dybul, Executive Director, Global Funds

According to the WHO, AIDS is the leading cause of death among women aged 15-44 worldwide. Nearly 60% of those living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women. UNICEF estimates that nearly 12 million children in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. Women and children living with HIV also face other conditions, ranging from inadequate access to family planning to lack of antenatal care to the need for food and nutrition support. As part of its overall prevention, care and support, and treatment efforts, PEPFAR is leveraging and linking HIV services to broader delivery mechanisms that improve health outcomes for women and children. Some of these activities include:

Increasing investment in prevention of mother-to-child transmission to meet 80% coverage levels in HIV testing and counseling of pregnant women and 85% coverage levels of ARV prophylaxis for those women who test positive;

Increasing the proportion of HIV-infected infants and children who receive treatment commensurate to their representation in a country's overall epidemic, helping countries to meet national coverage levels of 65% for early infant diagnosis, and doubling the number of at-risk babies born HIV-free;

Expanding integration of HIV prevention, care and support, and treatment services with family planning and reproductive health services, so that women living with HIV can access necessary care, and so that all women know how to protect themselves from HIV infection;

Strengthening the ability of families and communities to provide supportive services, such as food, nutrition, education, livelihood and vocational training, to orphans and vulnerable children; and

Expanding PEPFAR's commitment to cross-cutting integration of gender equity in its programs and policies, with a new focus on addressing and reducing gender-based violence.

## LeaderSpeak

**The United States of America's continued commitment will be a stepping stone towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals**

Michel Sidibe,  
Executive Director, UNAIDS on PEPFAR's  
new prevention targets for adolescent girls  
and young women; new treatment targets  
for pregnant women, children and adults.



## News & Titbits

# shuga

The PEPFAR-supported MTV award winning youth TV drama on love, sex and relationships has just won its third Gold Award for Outstanding Drama at the World Media Festival, April 2016.

PEPFAR has much to be proud of!

## An HIV Timeline

**October 2015**

UNAIDS released their 2016-2021 strategy in accordance with the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which called for an acceleration in the global HIV response, to reach critical HIV prevention and treatment targets and attain zero discrimination. Earlier in July, UNAIDS had announced that the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) relating to HIV and AIDS had been achieved six months ahead of schedule. The target of MDG 6 - halting and reversing the spread of HIV - saw 15 million people receive treatment.

**December 2015**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announces it will lift its 30-year-old ban on all blood donations by men who have sex with men and establish a policy that permits them to donate blood if they have not had sexual contact with another man in the preceding 12 months.